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ABSTRACT

This report presents selected research results on the backgrounds, attitudes, and activities of a special sample of New Jersey school board members. The purpose of the study was to determine the influence of women board members on decision-making. Members of 37 New Jersey boards were interviewed in 1978. This report highlights the research findings in three major areas. The first section examines backgrounds, motivations, and circumstances of election or appointment of participants in the study. The second section is devoted to a comparison of women and men in their roles as board members. The third section presents an analysis of attitudes and board activity in an area of special significance to male-female roles in society. The paper concludes that differences between women and men found in the research imply subtle but discernible alterations in the functioning of school boards as women come to make up half the membership. (Author/LD)

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WOMEN AND MEN ON SCHOOL BOARDS: A Summary Report to Participants in a Study of Thirty-Seven New Jersey Boards*

by

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WOMEN AND MEN ON SCHOOL BOARDS:
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Nearly 5,000 residents of New Jersey voluntarily give a great deal of their spare time to serve on their local boards of education. Their decisions not only have direct consequences for the education of youth or the level of taxation; they also have numerous indirect effects, ranging from local property values to the civil rights of individuals. Yet the membership and activities of school boards remain among the most unexamined aspects of local government.

This report presents selected research results on the backgrounds, attitudes and activities of a special sample of board members. The research has been guided by questions arising from a notable change in the sex composition of school boards. At a time when many districts in New Jersey have reported increasing difficulties in recruiting candidates,[1] women have shown a dramatic increase in membership. As recently as 1971, women were only 13% of board membership in New Jersey. By 1978, women constituted 35% of all school board members.

This increase represents a new source of talent and energy in the governance of education. If the observations of one male board member are applicable generally, the presence of women may also imply changes in the manner in which boards operate:

> *I'll tell you why we've been very good with affirmative action programs. Those of us in industry believe in it...but I think primarily -- we have four women on the board, and these women are very active...Sometimes, personally, I think they're too active, getting into school business. They do their homework because they have time during the day.... They have no compunctions about going to Trenton, whether it be the Assembly or whether it be the State Boards Association.... Sometimes it's really no good. But I believe basically the women have pushed better than the men could.*

How widespread are such differences between male and female board members? Do women bring to school board membership special backgrounds, skills or perspectives that may affect the functioning and decision-making of boards? Do boards with many women members differ from boards with few or no women in their priorities, their "style" of operation, their relations with other elements of the school system or the community, or in the kinds of decisions made?

The Sample of Board Members

In an effort to explore possible answers to these questions about men and women on school boards, the Eagleton Institute's Center for the American Woman and Politics, under a grant from the National Institute of Education, interviewed members of 37 New Jersey school Boards in early 1978. All are nine-member, elected boards, operating K-12 districts. The sample was designed so that approximately half the boards have one or no women members; half have four or five women. The two halves are matched on a number of demographic characteristics of the districts: equalized valuation per pupil, size of district school enrollment, median education of the population, median income of the population, percentage women in the labor force, and percentage employed women with professional or managerial occupations.

The resulting sample of boards cannot be said to be representative of all those in New Jersey. Because of limitations on the types of districts selected for study, the sample districts tend to be located in medium-sized, suburban communities along commuter routes serving New York City and Philadelphia.

Of the 331 members serving on selected boards,[2] 299, or 90%, agreed to be interviewed. In addition, 85% completed questionnaires, resulting in either questionnaire data or a personal interview for 92% of those from whom information was sought.[3]

Synopsis

This summary report highlights research findings in three areas, each a major section of the presentation:

1. BECOMING A BOARD MEMBER. In this section we consider how and why women and men come to serve on their local boards of education. We examine the backgrounds, motivations and circumstances of election or appointment of the participants in our study.

2. BEING A BOARD MEMBER. This section is devoted to a comparison of women and men in their roles as board members. We describe the extent of

their activity, their attitudes on educational issues, their priorities in board activities, and how they are perceived by their colleagues.

3. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SEXUAL EQUALITY IN EDUCATION. In this third section of research findings, we present our analysis of attitudes and board activity in an area of special significance to male-female roles in the society.

The final section of the report is devoted to a brief summary and conclusions.

BECOMING A BOARD MEMBER

Even in a democracy, the proportion of the citizenry willing and able to take an active part in community affairs is typically small. Public office especially tends to attract a select group: the better educated and more prosperous, those whose occupations permit flexibility and the investment of relatively large blocks of time in public service, those who are conscious of a stake in the governance of their community, those who have developed, often in childhood or adolescence, a sense of obligation and commitment to participation in public affairs. The school board members in our study share these characteristics and motivations of community leaders.[4]

Education and Occupation

Among school board members are bankers, engineers, secretaries, teachers, cabinetmakers, police officers, farmers, students and interior decorators. Some did not complete high school; others possess Ph.D.'s. As a group, however, board members are highly educated and have prestigious occupations. Approximately six in ten have completed college or have done graduate work (Table 1), and seven in ten have professional or managerial occupations (Table 2). Twenty-one percent of the women and 14% of the men are in education. Although a question can be raised here about potential conflict of interest, our research shows no relationship between having an occupation in education and giving high priority to related "self-interest" areas such as negotiations or staff evaluations.

Educational and occupational differences between women and men provide one possible source of differentiation in their roles as board members. Women are nearly as likely as men to have completed college (55% women vs. 64% men), but a

larger proportion of the men (29%) than of the women (16%) hold postgraduate degrees. The women are also less involved in the paid labor force (Table 1). In contrast to the 96% of men employed full time, only 41% of the women are full-time paid workers, and another 20% work part time. The difference that typifies the occupational involvements of women and men is illustrated by the fact that more than two in five of the men (43%) but only 15% of the women are managers and administrators.

The Stake of Parenthood

In the past, school board members were the elders of the community. Today, most board members have a more direct stake in the quality of local education.[5] An overwhelming 78% have at least one child in public school, and women are no different from men in this respect (Table 1).

Having children in the schools is mentioned often, especially by women, as a consideration in the decision to run:

> (Woman) *Well, it was a background of having five children go through the school system....*
>
> (Man) *Because I had six kids in the school district. I was close to education, interested in education and concerned that the district wasn't getting good educational leadership.*
>
> (Woman) *...I think once you have a youngster who has gone through a school system, then you truly understand it.*
>
> (Man) *...I feel it is important for a school board member to have children in the school because you are aware of some of the problems....*

Reflecting their status as parents of school-aged children, most school board members are in early middle age (Table 1). Although two individuals in our study are only 23 years old and one is 75, most (71%) are between 30 and 50 years. The median age of men is 45 years and of women, 43 years.[6]

Investment in the Community

The meaning of school board membership traces not only to the concerns of parenthood but also to an interest and involvement in the local community. School board members are aptly described as community-minded individuals. They are long-term residents (averaging fifteen or more years) and active participants in community affairs.

Organizational affiliations. In addition to their service on the school board, members typically are members of three or more organized groups (Table 3). Although women and men differ only slightly in the number of organizations to which they belong (medians of 3.0 for men and 3.4 for women), there are noteworthy differences in the kinds of affiliations reported. Proportionately more women belong to political (a category that includes the League of Women Voters), youth and school service groups; larger percentages of men are members of labor, business, professional, fraternal and veterans' groups.

Women also are far more likely than men to mention one or more specific community organizations as being especially supportive and helpful toward their candidacies or school board activities. Only 36% of the men, in contrast to 67% of the women, named such supportive organizations. Perhaps women rely more upon their credentials in community service as background for their candidacies because they more often lack the professional degrees and managerial occupations that men may use as qualifications. Moreover, organizations such as the League of Women Voters or the PTA, which have a predominantly female membership, are often more embedded in the broad concerns of the local community than are labor unions, veterans' organizations, business and professional groups or fraternal societies.

Other public offices. Organizational participation is not the only way in which board members involve themselves in the community. Approximately one in five of either sex is holding or has held some other public office, primarily on local boards or committees such as planning and zoning, school advisory, parks and recreation, or community action.

For incumbents of many public offices, their current office is but one stage within a larger context of political ambition. For example, among a group of 218 New Jersey council members questioned in 1977 as part of a larger survey of public officials, 49% of the men and 65% of the women expressed a desire to hold some other public office in the future.[7]

By contrast, only 29% of the school board members in our sample express interest in seeking future office when asked: "If you had the necessary support and the right opportunities, are there other elective or appointive offices at the local, county, state or national levels that you would like to hold?" Among those who would like other offices, the majority confine their aspirations to local government.

Unlike the pattern for councilwomen, women on school boards appear slightly less interested in future office than men (22% women vs. 32% men). Apparently school boards, which have three to four times the proportion of female members as local councils, attract women with relatively low levels of political ambitions.

Motivations to Serve. Paralleling their direct stake in the schools as parents and their high degree of community participation are the motivations that board members express when asked: "Was there some situation, event or incident that especially motivated you to become a member?" (Table 4.)

One in five report their principal motivation as a general desire for community service, often seeing board membership as a form of repayment to the community for what they have received:

> (Woman) *Being a product of the local schools and not being wealthy, it was an opportunity for me to pay back to my town what I got. Someone must have done it for me when I was a youngster, and I'm sure a name I'll never know.*
>
> (Man) *My parents came from the other side, and they worked hard to give me an education, and I thought the least I could do was try to do something for others...help some of the other kids in town or do some sort of service.*
>
> (Man) *I almost consider it as a moral obligation to do something for the community.*

An even larger proportion, 39% voice dissatisfaction with some aspect of the school system or a desire for new programs as their principal motivation. The nature of these concerns ranges widely:

> (Man) *We were dealing in a number of controversies...Christmas program...sex education... a school closing....Really I was concerned that we were spending too much time in these monumental community battles, and we really wanted to educate the kids.*
>
> (Man) *...it became quite apparent that students were not being taught discipline, cooperation with others.*
>
> (Man) *I wasn't happy with the conditions of the buildings and grounds, and I wasn't happy with the education the children were getting.*
>
> (Woman) *...chopping $50,000 off the child study team, so I decided to run.*
>
> (Woman) *...special education. There was a tremendous need of improvement....No board members seemed particularly to have any interest in the area.*

(Woman) *I think the impetus for me personally was T & E legislation in Trenton.*

(Woman) *I would say the insensitivity of the board to the public was an overriding factor... and the Superintendent's inadequacies in dealing with people.*

Nearly one-quarter (23%) say there was no special motivation, instead citing urging by others or their own qualifications and involvement in community activities. Only 10% mention anything about school finances, either unhappiness over budget cuts or unhappiness over the level of taxation.

Men and women differ in the kinds of motivations they express, with women relatively more focussed on the nature of the school system and men more often mentioning either a general desire for community service or problems in the financing of local education. Like the varying patterns of organizational activity, these differing motivational emphases suggest women's special experience of direct involvement in school activities.

Election or Appointment to the Board

Despite some differences in backgrounds and motivations, women and men report remarkably similar circumstances surrounding their election or appointment. When questioned about how they came to be board members -- whether they first had the idea themselves or whether some person or group approached them to serve, the responses of women and men are similar (Table 5). Thirty percent of women and 32% of men report being self-recruited. Nearly a quarter of each sex were approached by other board members, and the remainder mention other residents, friends, family members, or organizations.

Relatively few board members have long tenure in office (Table 6), perhaps another outgrowth of the tendency for members to serve while their children are in the school system. Among those in our study, interviewed in early 1978, 55% had first begun service as recently as 1975. Only 12% had entered office prior to 1970. Since the proportion of women among school board members has shown an upward trend, an even higher proportion of women than of men are recent entrants.

About eight in ten among both men and women first achieved membership by election rather than appointment to an unexpired term (Table 6). In their most recent election, nearly half were in races with fewer than two candidates for each vacant seat -- a situation less competitive than the typically partisan elections for council or township committee (Table 7).

Women show at least as high a vote-getting ability as men: Forty-three percent of the women compared with 35% of the men were the top vote-getters in their last election (Table 7).

BEING A BOARD MEMBER

In our review of the recruitment of women and men to school boards we have found both similarities and differences. Women and men are similar, on the average, in being parents of school children, in the number of organizations they belong to, and in the manner by which they were elected or appointed to the school board. They do differ, however, in education, occupation, types of organizational affiliations, and the motivations they express for becoming school board members.

Are such differences paralleled by contrasts in the ways in which women and men perform as board members? As with recruitment, the picture is mixed. Although many areas of concern are shared, there are definite signs of a sexual "division of labor" in the level of board activity, in attitudes on some educational issues, and in areas of specialization and reputed expertise. Among issues and activities examined in our research, those surrounding the implementation of sexual equality in education present the most distinct differences between women and men. We shall defer consideration of sexual equality to a subsequent section, concentrating in this section on other areas of relevance to being a board member.

Level of Board Activity

A substantial amount of time goes into board service -- a median of nearly 10 hours per week (Table 8). Although women as a group report more hours than men (10.4 hours for women vs. 8.3 hours for men), the difference is accounted for largely by women who do not have paid employment or who work only part time. Women who work full time devote no more time to board matters than do men.

In addition to a weekly board, conference or committee meeting, board members report that over the past year they have attended approximately 12 school-related events, have had an average of 25 discussions of board issues with members of the public, and 13 separate discussions with teachers or administrators[8] (Table 8). Women are more active than men in contacts with the public and with school personnel though, again, this higher level of activity is true only of women who are not employed full time.

Educational Programs and Personnel

Women -- especially women without full-time paid employment -- are significantly more likely than men to be named by other board members as "knowledgeable about educational matters," even though they are only slightly more likely than men to have occupational backgrounds in education (Table 9). This reputation for knowledgeability seems to reflect women's direct experience with their children's education. In the words of one respondent:

> *I had a knowledge of the schools that the men did not have, a day-to-day contact and involvement. ...I had been a PTA president. I could offer a perspective with which the men aren't familiar.*

Scattered evidence from past research suggests that women tend to concentrate their interests as school board members on educational programs and teaching staff, while men are more oriented to financial matters and the physical plant.[9] Our data are no exception to this pattern, which one respondent sees as the "woman's touch":

> *I...felt they needed the woman's touch...someone with...interest in the academic aspect instead of just the dollars that were being spent.*

Presented with a list describing seventeen areas of board activity or concern, proportionately more women than men identify areas directly relevant to educational programs and personnel as having highest importance (Table 10). Larger percentages of women see policy development, implementation of T & E, curriculum, special education, education of the academically talented, and hiring or evaluation of administrators and teachers as "one of the most important areas for school board activity." By contrast, larger percentages of men assign importance to capital improvements and, among men on boards with few women, to maintenance of buildings and grounds.

Although women assign somewhat greater importance to the implementation of T & E, as they tend to do with all educational programs, they do not differ from men in their assessment of the effects of T & E mandates (Table 11). About half the women and men feel that T & E will potentially have a positive impact on the educational experience of the children of the state of New Jersey. About one in seven sees a change for the worse, and the remainder predict no change, mixed effects, or are undecided. Among the positive effects most often mentioned are that T & E will force districts to examine their educational goals and policies, evaluate their strengths and weaknesses, and will help the poorer districts of the state. However, two-thirds also see T & E as

constraining the policy-making function of local boards. Forty-one percent lament the enhancement of state control, and one-third complain about the paperwork imposed by state requirements.

Fiscal Activity

In addition to their more intensive focus on educational programs and personnel, women appear more liberal than men in their attitudes about educational spending. With respect to the questions asked in this study, women are less likely than men to feel that teachers are overpaid, and they are less likely to feel that spending can be reduced without a sacrifice in quality (Table 12).

If women are less inclined to restrict spending on education, are they correspondingly more negative about the state-imposed budget caps? Apparently not. Only a few percentage points separate the proportions who see budget caps as "necessary": 35% women vs. 44% men. And although more women than men feel that budget caps have hurt their districts (56% women vs. 41% men), this difference is created largely by the evaluations of men on boards with few women. Among boards with balanced sex ratios, 54% of the women and 46% of the men feel that budget caps have hurt their districts.

Although women's attitudes on educational spending differ from those of the men, women seem to defer to men in financial matters. Men are named by other board members as having financial expertise proportionately more often than women (Table 9). Even women are more likely to name men and, in fact, men are more likely to have occupations related to finance. Moreover, women do not appear to be dissatisfied with their board's accomplishments in this area of "masculine influence." Women are as likely as men to give their boards high marks on the level of the budget, teacher negotiations, maintaining buildings and grounds, or capital improvements (Table 13).

External Relations

Three areas of the board's relations with others have been examined in the research: relations with the public, with the District Superintendent, and with the state. There is only marginal evidence that women give a different slant to their roles in these areas.

Relations with the community. "The primary job of a school board is to ensure that the school system reflects the expectations and values of the community." This philosophy of representation is shared by approximately three-quarters of the men and women in our study (Table 12). It is slightly

more often the women, however, who give high priority to community relations. Fifty-six percent of the women, in comparison with 46% of the men, identify community relations as one of the most important areas for school board activity (Table 10). Women also enjoy more of a reputation among other board members, especially among the men, as relating well to the public (Table 9).

Women reputed to be the public relations experts on their boards are disproportionately those with lesser involvement in the labor force. As described earlier, women who are not employed or who are employed only part time have more contacts with the public than either men or women employed full time. These women also give higher priority to community relations, with 67% considering community relations among the most important areas of board activity, in comparison with 52% of women with full-time employment.

Board-superintendent relations. The relatively greater interest of women in issues such as curriculum and instruction is thought by some to be a potential source of friction with school superintendents, who may view such interest as encroachment on their domains. At least one study has noted a degree of antagonism on the part of superintendents toward female school board members, particularly toward "housewives," who may have both motivation and time during the day to scrutinize school operations at firsthand.[10]

In the present research we find only slim evidence that women's interest in school activities may be accompanied by heightened conflict with administrators. In several respects, women and men are similar in their attitudes and perceptions. Women are no different from men in the percentages agreeing or disagreeing that "school boards are handing over too much control to administrators (Table 12). In addition, similar proportions are satisfied with their superintendent and with the balance of power between superintendent and board (Table 14). Moreover, the number of women on a board is unrelated to the amount of disagreement reported by board members in the area of board-superintendent relations.

A few of the research findings do, however, hint at greater board-superintendent tension as an indirect effect of women's board membership and interests. A slightly higher percentage of women (54%) than of men (44%) disagree strongly with the statement: "A school system is better off if the board leaves educational decision-making to the expertise of school administrators and concentrates on finance and physical facilities (Table 12). When asked about their major frustrations as board members, women more often find fault with school administrators, while men are more likely to complain about negotiations and teacher performance. However, these differences are small.

In at least one respect, the suspicion with which superintendents have viewed housewives in past research finds a parallel in our study. Whereas only 7% of women employed full time feel that the superintendent has too much power in relation to the board, 24% of women employed part time or not employed hold such an opinion. Yet about two-thirds of both groups of women say they are satisfied overall with the superintendent's performance. On balance, the effect of women's school board membership on relations with superintendents appears to be discernible but quite small.

Relations with state agencies. A third area of external relations, that between school boards and the state, can be summarized briefly. Approximately eight in ten among both women and men feel there is too much state control of education (Table 12). As already noted, substantial proportions foresee the further erosion of local control through state-imposed budget caps and T & E mandates. However, such opinions may reflect the middle-class suburban districts typical of our sample rather than the sentiments of school officials statewide. Board members in such districts often comment that they were already providing thorough and efficient education without the intervention of the state, and that the imposition of caps on spending only threatens quality educational systems established over years of local control.

Internal Relations

In our comparison of women with men on school boards, we have noted differences in educational, occupational and community backgrounds, in attitudes on educational issues, and in educational priorities. Do these differences imply disharmony between women and men?[11] With reference to the boards we have studied, the answer is a qualified no.

The majority of board members perceive their boards as operating harmoniously, with members getting along well or having only occasional differences (Table 15). Only one in five perceives notable factions, rivalries or hostilities as commonplace. However, there is a slight difference in perceptions between members of boards with one woman or none and members of boards with several women. While 72% of members of boards with no women or only one woman feel they get along well, the same is true of only 61% of those on boards with balanced sex ratios.

Colleagues' evaluations. An alternative way of viewing potential conflict between women and men is to ask how members regard one another. We have already noted that women and men

are perceived by other board members as having differing kinds of expertise, with women more often named for educational knowledge and skill in public relations and men more often named as knowledgeable about financial matters. Are women and men also differentially valued as colleagues -- as people who are liked, agreed with, cooperative, hardworking or effective?

In many ways, women are at least as highly esteemed as their male colleagues (Table 9). Women and men are about equally likely to be named by other board members as someone who is personally liked or as someone having similar views on issues. And women are consistently more likely than men to be named by others as cooperative, hardworking, and as having ability to get things done.

Leadership. In one important respect, however, women are at a disadvantage. Though as active as their male colleagues -- in some ways more active -- women do not hold an equal share of leadership positions.

The disparity seems to lie more in informal evaluations than in formal leadership posts. Differences in formal leadership are not large, especially when one considers that women have not served as long a time, on the average. Eighty-four percent of the men chair one or more committees, while 65% of the women do so. Of the 19 boards with four or more women members, six have female presidents.[12] However, women are distinctly less likely than men to be named by other board members as a person who "exercises leadership and authority" (Table 9).

If women do not exercise leadership on their boards to the same extent as their male colleagues, then -- even if their views on issues and their priorities do differ from those of men -- their influence is problematic. We shall devote more attention to this question of influence, as we turn now to examine differences between women and men on the issue of sexual equality.

IMPLEMENTATION OF SEXUAL EQUALITY IN EDUCATION

Local school boards in New Jersey face both federal and state mandates to achieve sexual equality in education -- Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Title 6: Equality in Educational Programs (NJSA 18A: 36-20). Attitudinal differences between women and men on the issue of sexual equality in education are perhaps the clearest of all the research findings resulting from our comparisons of male and female school board members. But while a larger percentage of women than of men would like to see their districts more active in the implementation of sexual equality, there is also evidence that the subject has relatively low salience and priority among

both sexes. This low salience appears to affect the efforts board members are willing to make to press their views on either side of the issue.

Sex Differences in Attitudes

The issue of sexual equality in education is an obvious candidate for predicting differences between women and men. Though not all women subscribe to the goals of the women's movement, those who have been most active in promoting changes in women's status are nearly always women.

As predicted, the women in our study do have more positive attitudes toward sexual equality than the men (Table 16), regardless of the number of women on a board and whether or not they are employed outside the home. Proportionately more women dispute the notion that women are less capable of contributing to economic production, or that women should worry less about their rights and more about being good wives and mothers. They are also more likely to reject differential treatment of male and female students in counseling, course enrollment, physical education, or encouragement for college attendance. Finally, they are less likely than their male colleagues to subscribe to stereotypical beliefs that women make better elementary school teachers or that men make better secondary teachers.

Low salience. Although they differ in their views, the issue of sexual equality in education is not one of high priority for either women or men. Nearly two in five, regardless of sex, could not correctly identify their district's affirmative action or compliance officer. In a checklist of seventeen areas of board activity, 23% of members (25% of women and 21% of men) on boards with four or more women said they had not dealt with the implementation of Title IX at all over the past year. Such complete absence of activity was perceived by 18% of members on boards having one or no women (4 out of 13 women and 16% of the men). No more than 20% - 30% of any category saw the issue as of more than routine interest among board concerns.

Some board members seemed unaware of the existence of Title IX or of actions taken within their district:

> (Man) *To be perfectly honest with you, when I filled out the form the other night, I thought look at this! ...what in H is Title IX?...I called a couple of fellow board members and asked them the same question. And they said, I don't know what Title IX is.... I know what it is now because of your coming today.*
>
> (Woman) *I don't even know what Title IX is. Maybe it has something to do with girls and boys with sports. I don't know if we have completed that.*

I know our allocation is still very unequal.

(Woman) *I don't know if we have instituted a Title IX. The board has not participated in this. The community has not participated in this. I know we are conscious of it. We have a policy on it. We have said there must be equality in athletic programs, for instance. The policy we have only applies to the athletic programs.*

In contrast, and perhaps not surprising to board members struggling with issues of far higher salience, not one respondent asked the meaning of Thorough and Efficient Education or of budget caps.

The implementation of sexual equality is but one among many essential or legally mandated activities of New Jersey school boards. School districts in 1977 were simultaneously confronted with the broad requirements of T & E implementation, including programs in special education and programs for the gifted and talented. Decisions about these and other educational programs had to be made within a framework of caps on spending, inflationary increases in costs, and often declining student enrollments. Among these competing demands, both the implementation of Title IX and, more broadly, affirmative action are assigned low priority. The proportion feeling that either of these areas is "one of the most important areas for school board activity" is among the two or three lowest of seventeen areas members were asked to rate (Table 10).

Receptivity to increased activity. Although both women and men assign relatively low priority to the implementation of sexual equality in education, the women are more supportive of a possible enhancement of effort. Sixty-five percent of the men but only 39% of the women feel that the issue of sex discrimination in the schools has received too much attention, at the expense of more important issues (Table 16). Thirty-one percent of the women but only 11% of the men feel that their own districts should be doing more to implement sexual equality (Table 17). Women who are employed full time are especially likely to favor more activity, with 52% endorsing increased action in comparison with 21% of other women.

Differences Among Boards

Given the greater propensity of women, as a group, to value programs promoting sexual equality, one may ask whether boards having a rough equality in the number of male and female members seem to be more active regarding such programs than boards with no women or a lone woman. On the one hand, if there is a one-to-one correspondence between the attitudes of individual members and actions or decisions of the board as

a group, then the sex composition of a board should be related to the level of board activity in promoting sexual equality. On the other hand, a variety of processes may inhibit such correspondence. Perhaps proportional equality of numbers does not indicate proportional influence in decision-making. As we have noted, women are less likely than men to exercise leadership on their boards. An additional argument against a special influence of women in promoting sexual equality is that all boards confront similar legal mandates. Perhaps the force of law creates a uniformity in decision-making outcomes despite diversity of individual opinions.

Amount of board activity. Our research analysis suggests only a very modest association between the number of women on a school board and that board's level of activity regarding sexual equality. Board members were questioned in detail about actions within their districts over the past year to implement sexual equality in the following areas: sex-integration of courses or changes in curriculum materials; hiring, promotion or nonclassroom assignments of professional staff; physical education instruction, interscholastic athletic programs, including possible changes in budget allocations; noninstructional policies affecting students; participation by board members or staff in programs designed to give assistance in implementing sexual equality; communication with the community regarding the rules of sex discrimination. From their replies, a simple additive score was constructed in which an action -- such as equalizing the pay of male and female coaches or reviewing curriculum for sexual stereotypes-- was given a score of 'one' if two or more members mentioned the same action. Scores range from a low of one to a high of 11.

Women mention significantly more events than men, perhaps a reflection of a somewhat greater awareness and interest. However, when boards with four or more women are compared with boards having no women or a lone woman, there is only a slight, statistically nonsignificant tendency for boards with higher numbers of women to have higher levels of activity in the implementation of sexual equality.[13]

Despite the greater receptivity of women to programs aimed at achieving sexual equality in education, there is little evidence that a board's activity in this area reflects the presence of women as board members. Such activity would appear to depend upon other conditions, one of which is participation by the district in training programs aimed at sexual equality. For example, boards that have participated in the Rutgers Training Institute for Sex Desegregation of the Public Schools do report more actions aimed at achieving sexual equality.[14] However, participation of a district in the Institute is unrelated to the number of women on a board.

Conflict over implementation of sexual equality. One clue to

the lack of an association between the sex composition of a board and board activity to implement sexual equality appears in the analysis of interpersonal relations among board members. Though women as a whole enjoy a greater reputation than men for cooperativeness, the average reputation of women for cooperativeness is lower on those boards that have been active in the implementation of sexual equality than on boards that have been relatively inactive.[15] Moreover, disagreement over Title IX and affirmative action is the only area of conflict, out of nine areas examined, which is significantly correlated with the sex composition of the board. Members of boards with balanced sex ratios are more likely to report their boards as having experienced dissensus or conflict over sexual equality than members of boards with no women or only one woman.[16] This relationship exists even when one considers only the perceptions of the men on balanced vs. homogeneous boards.[17]

These findings offer some insight as to why the more favorable attitudes of women toward sexual equality in education are not clearly reflected in a higher level of implementation among boards with more women members. Sexual equality is an area of notable disagreement but also one of relatively low priority. Members who push their views in such a situation do so at risk of being considered uncooperative, threatening harmony and solidarity among board members.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Is there a "woman's angle" to school board membership? In-person interviews and questionnaires from nearly 300 individuals on 37 school boards in New Jersey suggest that there is, although our results must be considered tentative, awaiting the accumulation of future research.

Women and men have differing familial, occupational and community positions in the general society. When this fact is taken into account, the results of our research contain few surprises. Patterns of differences between women and men on school boards mirror patterns in the general society. Several themes describe these differences.

Traditionally women have supervised their children's education and have acted as the family's representative to the school system.[18] Women's roles on school boards reflect this traditional experience. Although women have less formal education than their male colleagues and are only a little more likely to have occupations in education, they are proportionately more often the "educational specialists" on their boards. They more often run for office because of a desire to change or preserve some aspect of the school system; they give priority as board members to the quality of personnel and of educational programs; they are more

supportive than men of the salaries teachers receive and more reluctant to see educational spending reduced; they develop a reputation among their colleagues for superior knowledge of educational matters. These emphases are logical outcomes of women's parental and community experience.

Another way in which women's roles on school boards reflect their societal position derives from their lesser involvement in the labor force. Approximately half the women in our study have no full-time employment outside the home, and such women devote more time to their school board membership than men or fully-employed women. The cliche that "housewives have more time" no doubt represents an unwarranted devaluation of the activities of homemaking. However, women without full-time jobs may well have more flexibility in their schedules. One consequence of the additional hours put in by homemakers appears to be specialization in community relations. Women without full-time employment average more contacts with the public, give higher priority than other board members to community relations, and are more often perceived by their colleagues as relating well to the public. Lack of full-time employment may also facilitate the development of an educational specialist role (and sometimes a "gadfly" role) among women, for homemakers average more contacts with teachers and administrators, as well as with the public.

The community relations orientation of women also reflects conventional beliefs about women as the experts in interpersonal relations -- the peacemakers not the powerseekers, the cooperators not the competitors, the consensus seekers not the ideological purists. Consistent with such beliefs, women are named more often than men by their colleagues as being among the most cooperative members of their boards. However, additional research findings suggest that this reputation may disappear when women take positions on issues that differ from those of men and when they press for implementation of their views. For example, women on boards that have been active in the implementation of sexual equality in the schools are less likely to be named as cooperative than women on boards that are less active in this area.

The issue of sexual equality in education illustrates a final theme of our research findings that reflects women's general position in the society. Many women perceive a stake in sexual equality not perceived by men. As women -- and as mothers of daughters -- they often have an awareness through direct experience of the consequences of educational discrimination, stereotyping, and limitation of choice. Thus women on school boards, whether homemakers or career women, are more receptive than men to various actions to implement sexual equality in education.

We find, however, that a board's level of activity in the

implementation of sexual equality does not depend in any clear way upon the number of women serving on a board. Some indirect evidence in our research suggests that the special roles that women perform on boards may operate to inhibit intense goal-directed activity. For example, the fact that women have a special reputation as cooperators and conciliators rather than as leaders may limit their influence in decision-making and may indicate an unwillingness to heighten open controversy, especially over an issue that has low priority for both sexes, as does the issue of sexual equality in education.

There is a woman's angle to school board membership, but care must be taken not to exaggerate women's separateness or the potential consequences of differences between males and females. Women and men on school boards are not adversaries, divided into warring camps. Nor are they constrained by a rigid division of labor bounded by gender. Our report necessarily has described statistical uniformities, though many individuals do not conform to these general tendencies. Some women are fiscal conservatives; some men are women's rights advocates. Some women are leaders; some men are experts in community relations.

The differences between women and men found in our research imply subtle but discernible alterations in the functioning of school boards as women come to comprise half their membership. However, one must consider the possibility that current differences may prove to be transitory, changing with ongoing trends in the larger society. For example, women average more time in school board activity only when they do not have full-time, paid employment. If the entry of women into the labor force continues, we may expect a narrowing of the general sex difference in the level of activity.

Finally, we must not ignore what women and men have in common. Both are parents with a stake in the next generation, rooted in their communities and having an investment in the quality of community life. As such, women and men share many attitudes and interests. Of significance, when asked about the satisfactions they have experienced as school board members, the profiles of their answers are remarkably similar. Among these satisfactions is a sense of having contributed to the education of the young:

> (Woman) *I think the greatest satisfactions have been seeing the young people accomplish things, be they college-bound students or vocational students. I think my greatest satisfaction has been from sort of watching the progress of 5,800 children. And hopefully making some small contribution to their growth and educational development.*

(Man) *I guess probably the greatest satisfaction comes when the kids graduate from high school and, as board president, I've been fortunate enough to hand out diplomas. And I can stand there and think to myself that I had some part in it, that, hopefully, there are a few kids in the world that are a little smarter.*

In such ways do the diverse individuals who sit on local school boards find common purposes.

Table 1. SELECTED BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS OF SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS, BY SEX

Background Characteristics	Women %	Men %	Total Sample %
Age			
20-29	1	4	3
30-44	59	42	47
45-59	34	50	45
60 +	6	4	5
Total=100%[a]	(83)	(192)	(275)
Length of Community Residence			
Under 5 years	4	1	2
5-9 years	26	17	19
10-14 years	22	23	23
15-19 years	24	18	20
20 + years	24	41	36
Total=100%[a]	(86)	(193)	(279)
Education			
Completed high school or less	17	17	18
Some college	28	19	21
Completed college	22	15	17
Graduate work, or grad. degree	33	49	44
Total=100%[a]	(87)	(192)	(279)
Employment Status			
Full time	41	96	79
Part time	20	0	6
Not employed	39	4	15
Total=100%[a]	(75)	(167)	(242)
Marital Status			
Married	90	96	94
Not married	10	4	6
Total=100%[a]	(87)	(192)	(279)
Children in Public School			
0	20	23	22
1	22	28	26
2	34	26	29
3 or more	24	23	23
Total=100%[a]	(80)	(186)	(266)

[a]No answers are excluded from the percentage bases.

Table 2. OCCUPATIONS OF SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS, BY SEX

Occupation[a]	Women %	Men %	Total Sample %
No occupation	31	0	9
Professional, technical	34	37	36
Managers, administrators	15	43	34
Sales workers	6	7	7
Clerical workers, secretarial	11	2	5
Craftsmen	1	6	4
Operatives	1	2	2
Laborers	0	0	0
Farm	1	0	1
Service	0	3	2
Total=100%[b]	(83)	(189)	(272)

[a]Occupations are classified according to the system developed by the Census Bureau (See Alphabetical Index of Industries and Occupations, 1971).

[b]No answers are excluded from the percentage bases.

Table 3. ORGANIZATIONAL AFFILIATIONS OF SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS, BY SEX

Percentage Who Are Members of at Least One Organization in the Category:	Women %	Men %	Total Sample %
Political (e.g., Democratic or Republican clubs, LWV)	48	30	36
Professional, business (e.g., Chamber of Commerce)	20	48	39
Labor unions	1	6	5
Veterans' organizations	1	9	7
Youth-school (e.g., PTA, Little League, Boy Scouts)	58	44	48
General service (e.g., Lions, Rotary, United Way)	28	24	25
Cultural, recreational, sports (e.g., YMCA, bowling league)	31	30	31
Church-related groups	25	17	19
Ethnic, fraternal (e.g., Sons of Italy, Masons)	5	22	16
Public officials (e.g., School Board Association)	10	5	7
Alumni and university service	5	4	4
Advisory boards and commissions	18	16	16
Other	5	5	5
Total	(80)	(172)	(252)
Median Number of Memberships	3.4	3.0	3.1

Table 4. PRINCIPAL MOTIVATION FOR BECOMING A SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER, BY SEX

Principal Motivation	Women %	Men %	Total Sample %
Financial issues	4	12	10
Construction	2	4	3
General dissatisfaction with education	15	6	9
Desire for new programs	4	3	4
Student behavior or achievement	3	2	2
Dissatisfaction with superintendent or other school personnel	3	2	2
Internal dissension in system among teachers & administrators	3	1	1
Board performance, internal dissension	12	16	15
Dissension between board and school	1	1	1
Poor community relations	2	2	2
Desire for community service	10	24	20
Other	13	6	8
No motivating incident or factor	28	21	23
Total=100%[a]	(68)	(187)	(255)

[a]No answers are excluded from the percentage bases.

Table 5. WHO FIRST APPROACHED BOARD MEMBER ABOUT SERVING ON LOCAL BOARD OF EDUCATION, BY SEX

Approached First By	Women %	Men %	Total Sample %
Board members (past or current)	23	24	24
Other officials	0	0	0
Organized group	5	6	6
Other citizens, not organized	14	15	15
Family members	2	2	2
Friends	6	13	11
Approached but by whom is unspecified, or approached by multiple categories of others	19	7	10
Self-recruited	30	32	31
Don't know	.1	1	1
Total=100%[a]	(64)	(184)	(248)

[a]No answers are excluded from the percentage bases.

Table 6. INITIAL ENTRY TO THE SCHOOL BOARD BY ELECTION VS. APPOINTMENT AND YEAR FIRST BECAME A BOARD MEMBER, BY SEX

Election vs. Appointment	Women %	Men %	Total Sample %
First elected	78	80	80
First appointed to unexpired term	22	20	20
Total=100%[a]	(86)	(195)	(281)
Year First Became a Board Member			
Before 1970	12	13	12
1970	2	3	3
1971	2	6	5
1972	8	7	7
1973	7	9	9
1974	5	11	9
1975	16	19	18
1976	23	12	15
1977	26	20	22
Total=100%[a]	(84)	(192)	(276)

[a]No answers are excluded from the percentage bases.

Table 7. CIRCUMSTANCES OF LAST ELECTION IN WHICH BOARD MEMBERS RAN, BY SEX

Average Number of Candidates Per Seat	Women %	Men %	Total Sample %
1.00	15	10	12
1.01-1.99	30	35	34
2.00-2.99	42	44	43
3.00-3.99	8	9	9
4.00-4.99	4	1	2
5.00-5.99	1	0	--[a]
6.00-6.99	0	0	0
7.00	0	1	--[a]
Total=100%[b]	(74)	(183)	(257)
Whether or Not Board Member Was the Top Vote-getter			
Top vote-getter	43	35	37
Not top vote-getter	57	65	63
Total=100%[b]	(54)	(158)	(212)

[a]Percent is .5 or less.

[b]No answers and appointed are excluded from the percentage bases.

Table 8. LEVEL OF BOARD ACTIVITY, BY SEX

Board Activities Over Past Year	Women, Employed Full-Time %	Women, Not Employed Full-Time %	Total Women %	Total Men %	Total Sample %
Hrs./wk. on bd. matters					
1-5 hours	21	17	17	24	22
6-10 hours	43	29	33	46	42
11-15 hours	14	21	23	16	18
16-20 hours	11	19	26	9	11
21 + hours	11	14	11	5	7
Total=100%[a]	(28)	(42)	(82)	(192)	(274)
Median # of hrs. spent on bd. matters	8	12	10	8	10
No. school-related events or meetings attended					
0-9	21	27	22	29	27
10-19	54	34	43	39	40
20 +	25	39	35	32	33
Total=100%[a]	(28)	(41)	(81)	(189)	(270)
Median # of school-related events	10	10	12	12	12
No. discussions with the public					
0-19	29	24	27	37	34
20-39	25	18	19	26	24
40-59	8	26	16	17	17
60 +	38	32	38	20	25
Total=100%[a]	(24)	(34)	(69)	(177)	(246)
Median # discussions with public	23	40	40	25	25
No. discussions with teachers, administrators					
0-9	31	20	23	30	28
10-19	30	20	23	32	29
20-29	13	14	16	17	17
30 +	26	46	38	21	26
Total=100%[a]	(23)	(41)	(74)	(179)	(253)
Median # of discussions with teachers & admin.	11	24	20	12	13

[a]No answer, "many" and "few" responses are excluded from percentage bases.

Table 9. MEAN STATUS SCORES, BY SEX AND BY EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN[a]

Characteristic of Member	Women Total (Mean Score)[a]	Men Total (Mean Score)[a]	Women Employed Full Time (Mean Score)[a]	Women Not Employed Full Time (Mean Score)[a]
Exercises Leadership and Authority				
Choices by all members	129	191	154	123
Choices by men	124	185	156	115
Choices by women	128	176	143	129
Is Knowledgeable About Financial Matters				
Choices by all members	066	224	082	053
Choices by men	074	212	095	060
Choices by women	045	203	054	030
Is Good at Getting Things Done				
Choices by all members	190	168	178	184
Choices by men	200	165	196	197
Choices by women	165	131	157	150
Is Good at Relating to the Public				
Choices by all members	194	160	174	233
Choices by men	202	157	178	248
Choices by women	166	132	163	176
Works Hard as a Board Member				
Choices by all members	228	161	186	253
Choices by men	239	162	175	279
Choices by women	186	124	191	178
Is Cooperative				
Choices by all members	199	173	174	206
Choices by men	214	170	171	229
Choices by women	160	142	163	147
Is Knowledgeable About Educational Matters				
Choices by all members	221	158	192	263
Choices by men	237	157	207	296
Choices by women	178	124	151	190

(MORE)

Table 9 (Continued).

Characteristic of Member	Women Total (Mean Score)[a]	Men Total (Mean Score)[a]	Women Employed Full Time (Mean Score)[a]	Women Not Employed Full Time (Mean Score)[a]
Is Someone I Most Often Agree With on Board Issues and Decisions				
Choices by all members	203	218	192	214
Choices by men	199	219	199	212
Choices by women	189	175	177	185
Is a Member I Personally Like the Most				
Choices by all members	206	210	203	223
Choices by men	209	208	224	216
Choices by women	188	166	173	208

[a] Technical Note.

The status score for each characteristic was constructed as follows: Respondents were asked to name the three people ranking first, second and third with respect to a particular characteristic. Weights of 3, 2 and 1 were assigned respectively to first, second and third choices. A score for each individual was then calculated on the basis of choices received from others. The score represents the cumulation of choices received for first, second and third place, calculated as the proportion of points received out of the maximum number of points distributed by all group members. Scores include adjustment for both ties and nonresponses. The tabulation above represents the average (mean) score for each labeled category, with decimals removed to simplify presentation. Self-choice has been removed from the scores above. In comparisons of means, the usual statistical tests of significance are not presented because the data do not fit assumptions of independent probabilities. The authors are now investigating techniques for dealing with this problem.

Table 10. PERSONAL PRIORITIES IN BOARD ACTIVITIES, BY SEX, BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF WOMEN, BY SEX AND NUMBER OF WOMEN ON SCHOOL BOARD

Percentage responding "activity is one of the most important areas for school board activity":[a]	Total Women	Total Men	Women		Bd. with 4+ women		Bd. with 1/no women	
			Employed Full time	Not empl. Full time	Women	Men	Women[b]	Men
	%	%	%	%	%	%	#	%
School Curriculum	88	74	83	88	86	77	(13)	73
Special Education	46	36	50	49	47	24	(6)	43
Educ. of Acad. Talented	37	31	32	42	37	26	(5)	34
Xtra-Curric. Stud. Activ.	12	14	15	7	14	7	(0)	19
T & E Education	56	47	64	46	57	46	(6)	49
Processes of Policy Dev.	67	44	62	77	70	36	(7)	48
Educational Philosophy	62	60	46	72	60	68	(9)	56
Eval., Hiring/Admin. Staff	88	73	83	86	88	71	(11)	75
Eval., Hiring/Instr. Staff	67	53	63	67	69	47	(7)	57
Teacher Negotiations	80	74	83	79	79	77	(11)	73
Level of School Budget	80	78	83	74	80	74	(10)	81
Capital Improvements	28	38	28	28	30	40	(3)	36
Maintaining Bldgs., Grnds.	28	37	20	33	29	31	(3)	40
Board-Supt. Relations	76	69	83	70	76	77	(9)	64
Community Relations	56	46	52	67	56	43	(8)	47
Implementation of Title IX	21	9	39	11	23	6	(2)	11
Affirmative Action	25	16	39	16	26	14	(3)	18
Approx. totals[c]	(84)	(190)	(29)	(43)	(70)	(73)	(13)	(117)

[a] The sequence of items has been changed from the order in the questionnaire, to facilitate description of results.

[b] The number of women in this category is too small to support percentaging. Therefore, absolute numbers are supplied.

[c] Slight variations in the number responding to each item have been averaged, to simplify presentation. No answers and don't knows are excluded from the percentage bases.

Table 11. PERCEIVED IMPACT OF T & E, BY SEX

Anticipated Impact of T & E on the Educational Experiences of New Jersey Children	Women %	Men %	Total Sample %
Change for the better	54	46	49
No change	13	13	13
Change for the worse	14	13	13
Mixed	13	18	16
Don't know	6	10	9
Total = 100%[a]	(86)	(212)	(298)
Anticipated Impact of T & E on the Policy-Making Role of School Boards			
Enhance the policy-making	18	15	16
No difference on policy-making	6	9	8
Restrict the policy-making	64	62	63
Mixed impact on policy-making	5	10	8
Don't know	7	4	5
Total = 100%[a]	(84)	(209)	(293)

[a]No answers have been excluded from the percentage bases.

Table 12. ATTITUDES ON EDUCATIONAL ISSUES, BY SEX

Issue	Total Women %	Total Men %
Relative to their hours and the work they do, teachers are overpaid		
Strongly agree	8	15
Moderately agree	27	23
Neutral	7	18
Moderately disagree	29	22
Strongly disagree	29	22
Total = 100%[a]	(83)	(189)
In this state, educational spending could be considerably reduced with no sacrifice of educational quality.		
Strongly agree	5	19
Moderately agree	16	23
Neutral	2	5
Moderately disagree	31	20
Strongly disagree	46	33
Total = 100%[a]	(81)	(186)
Every state should require students to pass a test of minimal competency as a condition for graduation from high school.		
Strongly agree	51	60
Moderately agree	41	26
Neutral	2	3
Moderately disagree	2	3
Strongly disagree	4	8
Total = 100%[a]	(83)	(192)
In general, schools are paying too much attention to nonacademic subjects such as social adjustment.		
Strongly agree	12	13
Moderately agree	27	39
Neutral	10	10
Moderately disagree	35	26
Strongly disagree	16	12
Total = 100%[a]	(82)	(186)
In general, private schools do a better job of educating students.		
Strongly agree	14	17
Moderately agree	26	28
Neutral	11	9
Moderately disagree	20	22
Strongly disagree	29	24
Total = 100%[a]	(73)	(163)

Table 12 (Continued).	Total Women %	Total Men %
The primary job of a school board is to ensure that the school system reflects the expectations and values of the community.		
Strongly agree	36	37
Moderately agree	39	36
Neutral	1	1
Moderately disagree	17	13
Strongly disagree	7	13
Total = 100%[a]	(84)	(190)
A school system is better off if the board leaves educational decision-making to the expertise of school administrators and concentrates on finance and physical facilities.		
Strongly agree	6	7
Moderately agree	17	20
Neutral	2	3
Moderately disagree	21	26
Strongly disagree	54	44
Total = 100%[a]	(82)	(190)
School boards are handing over too much control to administrators.		
Strongly agree	16	11
Moderately agree	22	26
Neutral	9	13
Moderately disagree	35	32
Strongly disagree	18	18
Total = 100%[a]	(77)	(183)
State control over local school districts is reaching the point where the quality of education is threatened.		
Strongly agree	48	46
Moderately agree	31	33
Neutral	4	4
Moderately disagree	16	13
Strongly disagree	1	4
Total = 100%[a]	(83)	(191)
In the long run, busing school children to promote racial balance will prove to be a good thing for the country.		
Strongly agree	6	1
Moderately agree	4	9
Neutral	6	9
Moderately disagree	32	19
Strongly disagree	52	62
Total = 100%[a]	(79)	(182)

[a]No answers and don't knows are excluded from the percentage bases.

Table 13. MEMBER EVALUATIONS OF BOARD ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Percentage responding board has done satisfactory or outstanding job in area[a]	Total Sample	Total Women	Total Men	Bd. with 4+ women		Bd. with 1/no women	
				Women	Men	Women[b]	Men
	%	%	%	%	%	#	%
School curriculum	76	77	75	76	74	(10)	75
Special Education	83	81	84	81	85	(11)	83
Education of Academically Talented	50	39	54	34	53	(8)	55
Extra-Curricular Student Activities	74	74	73	74	73	(11)	73
"Thorough and Efficient Education"	85	85	86	83	88	(12)	85
Processes of Policy Development	67	70	66	68	69	(10)	65
Educational Philosophy	64	53	69	54	70	(7)	68
Evaluation, Hiring of Admin. Staff	66	65	66	69	81	(5)	58
Evaluation, Hiring of Instruct. Staff	70	67	71	68	78	(8)	67
Teacher Negotiations	86	87	86	84	88	(11)	85
Level of School Budget	89	90	88	90	89	(11)	88
Capital Improvements	68	67	68	69	73	(8)	64
Maintaining Buildings, Grounds	77	79	76	79	74	(10)	78
Board-Superintendent Relations	67	62	70	62	80	(7)	64
Community/Public Relations	54	47	57	49	58	(4)	56
Implementation of Title IX	69	64	71	62	69	(9)	72
Affirmative Action	69	65	70	64	68	(9)	72
Approximate totals[c]	(274)	(84)	(190)	(70)	(73)	(13)	(118)

[a]The sequence of items has been changed from the order in the questionnaire, to facilitate description of results.

[b]The number of women in this category is too small to support percentaging. Therefore, absolute numbers are supplied

[c]Slight variations in the number responding to each item have been averaged, to simplify presentation. No answers and don't knows are excluded from the percentage bases.

Table 14. OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH SUPERINTENDENT AND PERCEPTION OF SUPERINTENDENT'S POWER AND INFLUENCE, BY SEX

Overall Evaluation of Superintendent's Performance	Women %	Men %	Total Sample %
Satisfied	67	72	71
Dissatisfied	28	23	24
Mixed feelings	4	4	4
Don't know, no opinion	1	1	1
Total = 100%[a]	(83)	(212)	(295)
Power and Influence of the Superintendent Relative to Board			
Too much power	17	13	14
Not enough power	13	11	12
Right amount of power	61	68	66
Don't know	9	8	8
Total = 100%[a]	(82)	(212)	(294)

[a]No answers have been excluded from the percentage bases.

Table 15. BOARD AGREEMENT VS. CONFLICT OVER DECISIONS, AND SOLIDARITY VS. HOSTILITY, BY SEX

Agreement vs. Conflict and Split-Voting on Actions and Decisions	Women %	Men %	Total Sample %
Members generally in agreement	58	67	64
Members generally split	28	23	24
It depends on the issue	12	9	10
Don't know, uncertain	2	1	2
Total = 100%[a]	(86)	(213)	(299)
Friendship and Getting Along Well vs. Hostilities or Factionalism			
Members get along extremely well	6	6	6
Members get along well	58	62	60
Had problems in the past, but get along now	12	7	9
Have notable hostilities & factions	22	22	22
Don't know, uncertain	2	3	3
Total = 100%[a]	(83)	(210)	(293)

[a]No answers have been excluded from the percentage bases.

Table 16. ATTITUDES ON ISSUES RELATING TO SEXUAL EQUALITY, BY SEX, BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF WOMEN, BY SEX AND NUMBER OF WOMEN ON SCHOOL BOARD.

Issue[a]	Total Women	Total Men	Women		Bd. 4+ women		Bd. 1/no women	
			Employed Full time	Not Empl. Full time	Women	Men	Women[b]	Men
	%	%	%	%	%	%	#	%
The issue of sex discrimination in schools has received far too much attention and is taking time and resources away from more impt. issues								
Strongly agree	16	22	14	17	18	15	(1)	27
Moderately agree	23	43	21	27	23	39	(3)	44
Neutral	6	11	3	10	6	17	(1)	7
Moderately disagree	29	14	31	24	28	17	(4)	13
Strongly disagree	26	10	31	22	25	12	(4)	9
Total = 100%[c]	(82)	(179)	(29)	(41)	(68)	(69)	(13)	(111)
Sons in a family should be given more encourage. to go to college than daughters.								
Strongly agree	2	3	0	0	3	0	(0)	4
Moderately agree	0	5	0	0	0	4	(0)	6
Neutral	0	5	0	0	0	4	(0)	6
Moderately disagree	3	14	0	5	3	8	(0)	17
Strongly disagree	95	73	100	95	94	84	(13)	67
Total = 100%[c]	(86)	(190)	(30)	(44)	(72)	(72)	(13)	(119)
It is a mistake to counsel female students into jobs & careers that are incompatible with their femininity.								
Strongly agree	6	9	4	5	7	4	(0)	11
Moderately agree	9	21	7	10	10	16	(1)	24
Neutral	0	7	0	0	0	7	(0)	8
Moderately disagree	16	25	10	21	16	23	(2)	26
Strongly disagree	69	38	79	64	67	50	(9)	31
Total = 100%[c]	(83)	(183)	(29)	(42)	(70)	(70)	(12)	(114)

Table 16 (Continued).

	Total Women	Total Men	Women		Bd. 4+ women		Bd. 1/no women	
			Employed Full time	Not. Empl. Full time	Women	Men	Women[b]	Men
Boys should have preference in taking courses such as auto mechanics or woodworking because boys will have more need of such skills as adults.	%	%	%	%	%	%	#	%
Strongly agree	3	7	3	2	4	6	(0)	8
Moderately agree	14	29	20	11	15	21	(1)	34
Neutral	5	7	7	5	4	11	(1)	4
Moderately disagree	23	24	20	23	21	18	(5)	27
Strongly disagree	55	33	50	59	56	44	(6)	27
Total = 100%[c]	(86)	(187)	(30)	(44)	(72)	(72)	(13)	(116)
The quality of phys. ed. is likely to suffer with boys and girls in the same classes.								
Strongly agree	13	19	14	12	14	12	(1)	23
Moderately agree	18	22	14	21	16	20	(4)	23
Neutral	10	5	14	10	9	3	(2)	6
Moderately disagree	18	22	17	19	19	19	(2)	23
Strongly disagree	41	32	41	38	42	46	(4)	25
Total = 100%[c]	(83)	(179)	(29)	(42)	(69)	(67)	(13)	(113)
Women generally make better elementary school teachers, while men make better secondary teachers.								
Strongly agree	0	2	0	0	0	1	(0)	3
Moderately agree	6	14	8	5	6	12	(1)	15
Neutral	9	21	11	5	9	27	(1)	18
Moderately disagree	23	30	22	24	22	20	(3)	35
Strongly disagree	62	33	59	66	63	40	(6)	29
Total = 100%[c]	(80)	(161)	(27)	(42)	(68)	(60)	(11)	(102)

Table 16 (Continued).

	Total Women	Total Men	Women		Bd. 4+ women		Bd. 1/no women	
			Employed Full time	Not Empl. Full time	Women	Men	Women	Men
	%	%	%	%	%	%	#	%
On the average, women should be regarded as less capable of contributing to economic production than are men.								
Strongly agree	0	1	0	0	0	1	(0)	0
Moderately agree	1	6	0	2	1	3	(0)	8
Neutral	1	4	0	0	1	6	(0)	3
Moderately disagree	7	25	3	9	6	21	(2)	28
Strongly disagree	91	64	97	89	92	69	(11)	61
Total = 100%[c]	(85)	(189)	(29)	(44)	(71)	(72)	(13)	(118)
Women should worry less about their rights and more about becoming good wives and mothers.								
Strongly agree	3	12	0	2	3	13	(0)	10
Moderately agree	13	17	7	19	12	12	(3)	20
Neutral	9	18	10	12	7	15	(3)	20
Moderately disagree	15	22	17	16	16	17	(1)	25
Strongly disagree	60	31	66	51	62	43	(6)	25
Total = 100%[c]	(85)	(182)	(30)	(43)	(71)	(67)	(13)	(116)

[a] In the questionnaire, statements were presented in a different order from the sequence in this table, and were scattered among statements about other issues.

[b] The number of women in this category is too small to support percentaging and, therefore, absolute numbers are supplied.

[c] No answers and don't knows are excluded from the percentage bases.

Table 17. ATTITUDES TOWARDS BOARD ACTIONS AIMED AT IMPLEMENTING SEXUAL EQUALITY, BY SEX

"How do you feel personally about the changes your district has made to implement sexual equality? Has it gone too far, should it be doing more, or has it done about what it should?"

	Women Employed Full-Time	Women Not Employed Full-Time	Total Women	Total Men
	%	%	%	%
Gone too far	7	2	5	6
Should do more	52	21	31	11
Doing about right	34	70	57	74
Don't know	7	7	7	9
Total = 100%[a]	(29)	(43)	(86)	(208)

[a]No answers are excluded from the percentage bases.

NOTES

[1]Martin Gansberg, "Few Vie for Jersey School Boards," The New York Times, February 6, 1978.

[2]Two positions were vacant at the time of interviewing.

[3]These numbers represent an unusual degree of cooperation in a research project, testifying to the commitment and generosity of board members.

[4]For detailed descriptions of the characteristics and motivations of officeholders see: National School Boards Association. Women on School Boards (Evanston, Ill: National School Boards Association, 1974); Marilyn Johnson and Susan Carroll with Kathy Stanwick and Lynn Korenblit, Profile of Women Holding Office II, reprinted from Center for the American Woman and Politics, Women in Public Office: A Biographical Directory and Statistical Analysis, 2d ed. (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1978); Marilyn Johnson and Kathy Stanwick, Profile of Women Holding Office, reprinted from CAWP, Women in Public Office (New York: R.R. Bowker, 1976).

[5]Keith Goldhammer, The School Board (New York: Center for Applied Research in Education, 1964), p. 93.

[6]Women tend to be older than their male colleagues in most types of public offices. The reversal of this general pattern in our sample may stem from the strong tendency for members to be parents of schoolchildren, combined with the conventional pattern of women being a few years younger than their husbands.

[7]Figures have been computed for New Jersey respondents to a 1977 survey conducted by the Center for the American Woman and Politics. Results of the larger survey are reported in Johnson and Carroll, op. cit.

[8]Since some have served for less than one year, these figures actually understate the extent of activity typical of a year's service.

[9]National School Boards Association, op. cit., pp. 46-50; Trudy Haffron Bers, "Local Political Elites: Men and Women on Boards of Education." Paper for the annual meetings of the Southern Political Science Association, Atlanta, Georgia, 1975.

[10]Carolyn Mullins, "If Superintendents Could Pick Their Own School Board Members, Here's the Kind They Say They'd Choose," American School Board Journal, September, 1974, pp. 25-29.

[11]One previous study of school boards reports that the higher the number of women on the board, the more likely board members are to perceive their boards as in conflict, with extensive split voting. The author interprets the finding as indicating that women represent different constituencies and different educational interests. See Paul D. Blanchard, "If You're Jittery or Embarrassed Because Your School Board is 'Divided,' Maybe You Shouldn't Be," The American School Board Journal, 164:7 (1977), pp. 34-36.

[12]Among the 37 districts studies, only 2 have a female superintendent.

[13]The Pearsonian correlation is .189.

[14]The Pearsonian correlation is .357; p=.02. To avoid redundancy, participation in training programs was removed from the score of activity to implement sexual equality before computation of the correlation.

[15]Pearsonian correlation is -.485; p=.002. This is the only one of nine characteristics measuring interpersonal perceptions found to be correlated with the degree of board activity in implementation of sexual equality.

[16]The Pearsonian correlation is .283; p=.026. We asked about specific areas of conflict or disagreement by presenting board members with the same list of seventeen items for which they were asked to evaluate board accomplishments and to indicate personal priorities. Through factor analysis, these seventeen items were reduced to nine areas of conflict. Each board was scored on the degree of reported conflict in an area by averaging the perceptions of all the members of the board.

[17]The Pearsonian correlation is .324; p=.01.

[18]Note, for example, the paucity of males among the membership of PTA's in nearly all communities.